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State Historical Society honoring Mitchell's McLaird

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota State Historical Society will be presenting the Robinson Award, one of the Governor's Awards for History, this Saturday to James D. McLaird of Mitchell.

Four other individuals or groups are also being recognized by the State Historical Society for their efforts in preserving state history by receiving Governor's Awards for History.

The award winners include Doris Stensland of Sioux Falls, William "Bill" Ellwanger of Pierre, Christin Lee Hancock of Portland, Ore., and the Clay County Historical Society (CCHS) in Vermillion.

The awards will be presented at a luncheon on Saturday, April 14, during the annual history conference of the State Historical Society in Pierre.

"James McLaird and all these people are to be commended for their efforts at preserving our state's history," said Gov. Dennis Daugaard. "Because of their work, our past will be kept alive for future generations."

"We are pleased to give out these awards," added Jay D. Vogt, director of the State Historical Society. "These are just a few of the shining examples of how people across the state and beyond are helping us in our efforts to promote, nurture and sustain South Dakota history."

Named after former state historians Doane and Will G. Robinson, the Robinson Award is the highest award given in the field of history in South Dakota, recognizing a lifetime of outstanding and meritorious service.

McLaird is professor emeritus of history at Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, where he taught for 37 years. In 2005, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Dakota Wesleyan. McLaird is a long-time contributor to *South Dakota History*, the journal of the South Dakota State Historical Society. His writings cover a wide variety of topics in the state's history, including early exploration, the Black Hills gold rush, literature, and other subjects. His major works are *Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane: Deadwood Legends* (South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2008) and *Calamity Jane: The Woman and the Legend* (University of Oklahoma, 2005), which won the Best Book Award from Westerners International in 2006.

McLaird's achievements in education have been recognized with the Outstanding Educator Award from the Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United

Methodist Church (1995), as well as the Presidential Excellence Award (1994), the Clarke Award for Teaching Excellence (1999, 2004), the Outstanding Service to Alma Mater Award (1999), and the College of Arts and Humanities Distinguished Alumni Award from Dakota Wesleyan.

Stensland is the individual award winner. Through her writing, Stensland has described the history of the early days in South Dakota through a variety of sources, including three historical novels. She wrote a weekly newspaper column describing farm life in southeastern South Dakota, and also printed a cookbook. Through the years, Stensland has shared her knowledge of preserving history by giving presentations to church, book and community clubs.

Ellwanger was named the 2012 History Teacher of the Year. He teaches middle school and high school social studies for Stanley County Schools in Fort Pierre; he has been there 18 of his 28 years in the profession. Ellwanger is known for having a dynamic classroom, exceling at being student-centered and developing lessons that excite the interest of his students. Ellwanger's goal is to have his students develop academically, socially, emotionally and physically in a safe and motivating atmosphere.

Hancock, an assistant professor of history at the University of Portland, is the winner of the Herbert S. Schell Award for best article in the previous year's *South Dakota History*, the State Historical Society's award-winning quarterly journal. Her article, "Being "all things to all men": Louisa Irvine Riggs and the Cultural Implications of Women's Missionary Work," appeared in the fall 2011 issue of the journal. Hancock's article explores the ways in which the work of Riggs and other women missionaries extended beyond spiritual matters to include roles as fundraisers, administrators, public speakers, health-care providers, and agents of cultural change.

CCHS is the organizational award winner, and has an active membership that supports a variety of activities that preserve and publicize the history of Clay County and its inhabitants. These activities include a June ice cream social, a tour of local historical homes in early December, a regularly published newsletter, and a weekly newspaper column devoted to excerpts from historic newspapers. The volunteer society is headquartered in the Austin Whittemore House, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Saturday awards luncheon is part of this year's State Historical Society annual history conference, taking place Friday and Saturday in Pierre. This year's theme is "Playing on the Plains: Sports and Recreation in South Dakota." Registrations are still being accepted. Call (605) 773-6000 for more information.

The State Historical Society is headquartered at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. For more information, visit www.history.sd.gov or call (605) 773-3458.

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.